

Foundation module 6

Community mobilisation

Section 1 Concepts: the community and children's rights

Handout 1



What is a community in an emergency? Scenario

Part 1

A massive earthquake hits a major city in Asia killing many inhabitants and causing widespread destruction of property. Survivors of the earthquake are all transported to a number of warehouses on the outskirts of the town which have rapidly been prepared to receive them. As far as possible people are placed in rooms with their family and others from their place of origin but the lack of accommodation makes it difficult to house groups separately. The area affected encompasses people from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds; from the very wealthy and professional classes to very poor slum dwellers. There are also people from different religious groups present.

- In their everyday lives and prior to this event these people would have little in common and would not be likely to have any **sense of community**. The events have brought them physically closer, but is this a community?





Part 2

Despite their different backgrounds, the people affected by the earthquake currently have similar needs and a community mobilisation approach can help them to help themselves. However, the approach to working with this type of community would probably be quite different to working with a community who are linked by more than an event. The role of an external agency may be more around facilitating processes that help people to overcome differences and focus on their collective short-term needs, rather than seeking to build long-term alliances and structures. Factors such as the length of time the group are likely to remain together and the nature of their needs will help to determine the best approach.

